

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8810

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 1333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: BILATERAL PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN TALKS NOT TO BE HELD

REF: ISLAMABAD 0333 AND 1302

SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN OF THE BELIEF THAT "THERE IS A CONNECTION" BETWEEN THE ASSASSINATION OF HAYAT MOHAMMED KHAN SHERPAO AND THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN. AS A RESULT, GOP HAS FOR THE PRESENT SCRAPPED PLAN TO SEEK IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS THROUGH BILATERAL TALKS. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS MORNING ADDITIONAL SECRETARY MFA, NIAZ NAIK, CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE TO ADVISE THAT AS A RESULT OF THE ASSASSINATION OF HAYAT MOHAMMED KHAN SHERPAO IN WHICH AFGHANISTAN BELIEVED TO HAVE A HAND, GOP HAS PUT ASIDE FOR THE TIME BEING ANY THOUGHT THAT RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN MIGHT BE IMPROVED THROUGH
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BILATERAL TALKS.

2. REFERRING TO THE CONTRETEMPS WHICH HAD FOLLOWED UPON PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S ACKNOWLEDGING TO THE PRESS ON JANUARY 2 THAT HE HAD INVITED PRESIDENT DAOUD TO VISIT PAKISTAN (ISLAMABAD 0333), NAIK SAID THAT SUBSEQUENTLY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, WORKING THROUGH THEIR RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES, HAD REACHED AGREEMENT THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI WOULD VISIT KABUL SOMETIME DURING THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 15 TO 20 TO MEET WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH AND OTHER AFGHAN OFFICIALS. ALTHOUGH THE GOP WAS NOT HOPEFUL THERE COULD BE ANY MAJOR BREAK-THROUGH THERE DID SEEM TO BE POTENTIAL FOR SOME COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ENDEAVOR ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT. SPECIFICALLY, NAIK MENTIONED THE LARGE AND UNDEVELOPED IRON ORE RESERVES IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLOITED TO SUPPLY THE KARACHI STEEL MILL BEING CONSTRUCTED WITH RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE.

3. DESPITE THE STATED MUTUAL OBJECTIVE OF SEEKING AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP THERE HAD BEEN NO ABATEMENT, NAIK SAID, IN THE "ANTI-PAKISTAN AND ANTI-BHUTTO PROPAGANDA" CARRIED ON BY KABUL RADIO. HE DISPLAYED A NUMBER OF TYPEWRITTEN SHEETS WHICH HE SAID WERE TRANSCRIPTS OF RECENTLY MONITORED KABUL RADIO BROADCASTS AND READ FROM SEVERAL OF THEM. IN ONE BHUTTO WAS DESCRIBED AS "WORSE THAN HITLER." THERE WAS FREQUENT REFERENCE TO HIS BEING A "DICTATOR" AND ONE "WHO CARRIES A NAKED SWORD IN HIS HAND...KILLING INDISCRIMINANTLY...". ALSO, DURING THE PAST MONTH AND A HALF KABUL RADIO HAS REPEATEDLY AND VIOLENTLY ATTACKED SHERPAO WHICH ATTACKS HAVE LED GOP TO BELIEVE THAT "THERE IS A CONNECTION" BETWEEN THE DEATH OF SHERPAO AND THE GOA. NAIK READ OFF THE FOLLOWING AS TYPICAL ANTI-SHERPAO STATEMENTS MADE BY KABUL RADIO: "HOW LONG WILL SHERPAO BE GUARDED BY THE PUNJAB POLICE? ...HIS LIFE WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE IF HE STAYS ON PAKHTOON SOIL...BALUCH AND PAKHTOONS HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE REVENGE."

4. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, NAIK SAID, GOP IS NOT ABLE TO CARRY ON ANY MEANINGFUL BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE

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GOA AND AGHA SHAHI WILL THEREFORE NOT BE GOING TO KABUL. AN ALL-OUT INVESTIGATION OF THE SHERPAO MURDER HAS BEEN ORDERED BY THE PRIME MINISTER. PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THE FRONTIER AND ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY IS SUCH THAT "THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND" IF THE GOP WERE TO MAKE GESTURES IN THE DIRECTION OF AFGHANISTAN WHICH MIGHT APPEAR TO BE CONCILIATORY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, NAIK ADDED, THAT THE GOP HAS ABANDONED ITS INTENTION OF STRIVING FOR AN

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH AFGHANISTAN BUT JUST WHEN
DIALOGUE MIGHT BE REOPENED IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY.

5. NAIK NOTED THAT WAHEED ABDULLAH TOLD THE PAKISTAN
AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY THAT SHERPAO KILLING DUE TO "ANTI-
RAPPROCHEMENT FORCES" AND THAT LAST NIGHT KABUL RADIO HAD
BROADCAST A STATEMENT BY AJMAL KHATTAK, FORMER SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE NAP WHO IS REPORTEDLY DIRECTING ANTI-GOP
ACTIVITIES FROM KABUL, WHEREIN KHATTAK CHARGED THAT PAK
INTERIOR MINISTE QAIYUM KHAN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TH
DEATH OF SHERPAO AND CALLED FOR PAKHTOONS IN THE PROVINCE
TO RISE AGAINST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. NAIK, MENTIONING
THAT GOP AWARE OF EXISTENCE OF TWO CAMPS NEAR KABUL WHERE
AGENTS ARE TRAINED TO CARRY OUT ACTS OF SUBVERSION IN
PAKISTAN, INDICATED GOP DOES NOT GIVE CREDENCE TO
SUGGESTION THAT SHERPAO'S DEATH DUE TO INTERNAL POLITICAL
RIVALRIES.

6. MFA HAS MADE SIMILAR REPRESENTATIONS TO OTHER MISSIONS.
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